

Interview with 65 year old white male, Mountain Rest, South Carolina (part 2 of 3) (Transcription)

W1 Side B

Q. <unintelligible text>. talking about the different trees, what are some uses that you and your ancestors have put to different types of trees?

A. Well, the chestnut oak tree was valuable to us to make <unintelligible text> We cut and use lumber from it on account of it their being too hard but a boards quartered, split quartered and you can pierce it will nail that way, but if it's slabbed off there's a <gap> nail won't go through it after it's <gap> but now they make hardwood floors. They got machines to put it down with. We use that to cover buildings with the very hard wood and white oak boards, we use those for covering houses, buildings and the hickory was used for <gap> and the white hickory, it greWd on the river, was used to make ox bows. You could bend a 2-inch bow without breaking it, perfect, out of it. It was for ox bows or <gap> to dry steel. It was very limber, too limber for <gap> And then the ash tree, they was use for <gap> and the most of the people back there used sourwood; <gap> made the sleds out of them. It was a light strong wood and it could make a <gap> by taking a young grove and letting it grow, just peel the bark and you had your hound. It was alright that way <gap> that way; I still do it. <gap> got too high; maybe one costs you four dollars and if you look in the woods you can cut you one for nothing. <gap> never has a splinter

Q. What about a black locus tree?

Library of Congress

A. They was <unintelligible text> it died around 1925 to 1927, I'd say, all the chestnuts died. Back where I live where the mountains is <unintelligible text> they died in the summertime and looked like the leaves cured on the trees. They was cured bright; the leaves, they died so suddenly. It looked like somebody shut 'em with a shotgun all the way around, and they grow to be 5 and 6 foot through and very tall make hundreds of <unintelligible text> they would be valuable today if we had to make picnic tables and stuff <unintelligible text>

Q. Well, what was wrong, a disease got the trees or what?

A. They say it was a blight, but it looked like the bark had been shot all the way around maybe a 2-foot space on it up about; I'd say from ten to fifteen foot up on the tree all the way around it <gap> the top died first.

Q. Well, are there any chestnut trees around now?

A. Well I'd like to go back to see here, probably fourteen year ago, I was back with a boy deer hunting and was showing him some old chestnut logs that was still laying on the ground, and I saw a chestnut leaf and I told him there was <gap> and got to looking around and we counted oh, there must have been six or seven tall young trees in good shape, and I wondered whether that blight got 'em or not, if it didn't they all should be now. They growd fast, probably eight or ten inches in diameter.

Q. Did the <gap> go at the same time?

A. The <gap> went, but it come back. I went over where my folks is buried last August and they were full <gap> bushes are hanging over the road, lots of <gap> I wanted to get

Library of Congress

back, but I didn't get to. It was a day that you come and they had the dedication scout boy; I went that evening.

Q. What use do you get out of a pine tree?

A. You can make boards out of it and use it for lumber and house <gap> and things when you need them. Old people use them for <gap> as well as hardwood <gap> They used anything they get and the reason they need those logs, huge logs don't never rot if you keep it covered and a round log does. When you heat one, <gap> comes in the side where you <gap> it don't come <gap> That's the reason they last this long. When they built those houses out of 'em, they had no <unintelligible text> so they made the wooden hinge It might be two hundred years old but it's still working. They didn't <unintelligible text>

Q. A while back we was talkin' about the rustle house and being a half way house and you mentioned the wealth of the people; this was half way to where? Where were they going?

A. <gap> They had that cold spring there and the first <gap> she was come up drawd over with some kind of rheumatism and they thought it was her washing clothes in that spring; you know, being in that cold water too much. She <gap> they didn't have no walkers, nothing like that and she went about over the floor on the little low chair, sliding the chair and a walkin' holding to the chair walkin'.

Q. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

A. Have 2 brothers and a sister.

Library of Congress

Q. And what are their names?

A. My older brother is Luis and the younger brother is Joe and sister's name, Heidi; she lives <gap> married a <gap> She's the one my mother sewed her hand up to tie <gap> cherry bark for herbs to make cough medicine cut her across the back of the hand; she looked off, she was catching the bark <gap> long butcher knife holding the blade in one hand and the handle in the other; she looked off something and <gap> she turned her hand and cut her right across there and her fingers fell down. Those, later, when I picked up her fingers <gap> pick 'em up, they run out, you know, <gap> and I told her, I said don't tell my dad; he'll beat me for doing that and she says I can't raise my fingers <gap> and we both went to the house and ma looked at it; she's the one that done the putting back together and she had my dad to whittle a board out <unintelligible text> wooden buckets would hold a

half a bushel or more and they had the top on them out of wood, those wooden buckets, take a piece of that wood and whittle it out <gap> and she sent me to Aunt Mitz, that was his sister, somebody in the country <gap> a little silk thread, white silk thread to <gap> people up with and she sewd that back, put them <gap> back together and <gap> and she don't even have a stiff finger in her <gap> I don't know whether a doctor could do it today or not.

Q. And what you brothers do?

A. He was a park ranger, my older brother. He worked at the state park probably, I don't know, maybe thirty years; he's working there with Jake Gray; him and Jake run that thing for a long time.

Library of Congress

Q. Right, and what about your younger brother?

A. He lives over in <gap> Salem side <gap> He just messes around, farms a little, makes a garden. He's disabled; he's the oldest one; he's younger than you, he's kind of feeble.

Q. Do you do any farming now?

A. Yeah, I farm some, make enough to feed my hogs, chickens, and beans, cure my meat that's the way I live.

Q. You got your own smokeshouse?

A. Yeah, make those pickle beans, <gap> sweet potatoes

Q. Well, how do you keep sweet potatoes all year around?

A. Well, I fix me a place up there to keep 'em and sell it, <gap> and I keep the sweet potatoes in the house, they like <gap>